

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

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SUBJECT: HOUPHOUET TRAVELS TO ODIENNE

1. PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY BEGAN HIS SECOND EXTENSIVE TRIP INTO THE INTERIOR MAY 9, WHERE HE WILL VISIT ALL PARTS OF THE DISTANT DEPARTMENT OF ODIENNE UNTIL MAY 17, WHEN HE RETURNS TO KORHOGO FOR 24 HOURS. HE WAS LAST IN ODIENNE, LOCATED IN THE CORNER OF IVORY COAST BORDERED BY MALI AND GUINEA, FOR THE INDEPENDENCE FETE IN AUGUST 1972. HE IS JOINED BY VARIOUS SUBSTANTIVE MINISTERS CONCERNED WITH DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT AND BY MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S POLITICAL BUREAU, INCLUDING PRESIDENTS YACE AND COULIBALY. COULIBALY, WHOSE FIEF IS ODIENNE, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ORGANIZING THE TRIP. THE VISITORS WERE PRECEDED BY A STEERING COMMITTEE DELEGATION WHICH WE UNDERSTAND STUDIED THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING NEW SOUS-PREFECTURES IN THE DEPARTMENT.

2. AS IN THE CASE OF HIS MARCH EXCURSION, HOUPHOUET MET WITH OFFICIALS AND CADRES FROM THE AREA TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO HIS TRAVELS

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TO LISTEN TO GRIEVANCES AND ASPIRATIONS AND REFLECT ON

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE. IN THE APRIL 23 REUNION, HE WAS TOLD OF CONCERNS OF THE ODIENNE AREA IN THE FIELDS OF WATER (ASKING DAMS SO THAT NEW AREAS CAN BE FARMED), EDUCATION, AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CATTLE RAISING. AS ELSEWHERE IN THE NORTH, THE REPRESENTATIVES COMPLAINED OF DEVASTATION OF CROPS CAUSED BY HERDS OF CATTLE FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES PROCEEDING SOUTHWARDS. ON LATTER POINT, HOUPHOUET PROMISED THAT MIN ANIMAL PRODUCTION WOULD SOON BE IN UPPER VOLTA AND MALI TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM.

3. ARRIVING IN ODIENNE, THE PRESIDENT MADE A NUMBER OF PROMISES ABOUT NEW ROADS, ELECTRIFICATION, WELLS, HEALTH FACILITIES, A HIGH SCHOOL, AND REDUCED AIR FARES, PROMISING THAT FUNDS WOULD BE LOCATED FOR ODIENNE AS WAS DONE PREVIOUSLY FOR THE KORHOGO AREA.

4. COMMENT: AS HOUPHOUET CONTINUES TO CONCENTRATE ON THE INTERIOR AND HIS PLEDGE TO ERADICATE DISPARITIES BETWEEN REGIONS, THERE IS STILL SPECULATION AS TO HOW FAR THE MONEY IS GOING TO GO. AS A POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER FROM KORHOGO JOKED TO A PARLIAMENTARIAN FROM DECAYING SASSANDRA IN THE SOUTH, BY THE TIME THE PRESIDENT GETS TO THE LATTER AREA THE SUGAR CANE, RICE, AND OTHER INVESTMENTS NOW BEING MADE IN THE NORTH WILL BE PRODUCING INCOME, WHICH CAN THEN BE SPENT IN SASSANDRA AND OTHER REGIONS. AFTER THE PROMISE OF 9 BILLION FRANCS FOR THE REGION COVERED BY THE MARCH TRIP, GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE GOING TO BE CAREFULLY WATCHED BY THE CADRES CONCERNED TO MAKE CERTAIN THERE IS A FAIRNESS IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LARGESSE. THE SAME POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER SAID HOUPHOUET'S NEXT TWO TRIPS WILL BE TO SEGUELA IN THE WEST AND BONDOUKOU IN THE EAST.
SMITH

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